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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
THE DIRECTOR OF INTELLIGENCE AND RESEARCH

1778/5

October 28, 1962

TO : The Secretary
FROM : INR - Roger Hilsman *Roger Hilsman*
SUBJECT: Analysis of Khrushchev's Message

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We have studied the full text of this morning's message from Khrushchev and have the following comments on it.

(1) On the face of it, the USSR has now accepted the President's proposal for the removal of Soviet offensive missiles from Cuba in exchange for US assurances to end the quarantine and not to invade Cuba.

(2) Khrushchev appears to interpret the President's letter as already constituting a US assurance against invasion, although he expands this assurance to include an end of exile activities hostile to the Castro regime. And, in consequence he asserts that the Soviet side of the arrangement (i.e. removing of the missiles and ending shipments of missiles) is already being implemented.

(3) Khrushchev indicates his willingness to have the Soviet dismantling of missiles now in Cuba subjected to verification by the UN; however, the method and extent of verification remain subject to further agreement. Khrushchev does not mention what precise method of verification he has in mind, but it should be recalled that in yesterday's letter (on the Turkish-Cuban trade-off) Khrushchev stated that supervisory personnel should be "representatives of the Security Council" and have the "confidence" of the Security Council, the US, the USSR, Cuba (and Turkey). Further, Cuba must give its permission for the inspection to occur.

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(4) Although Khrushchev states that he has already ended shipments of missiles in progress, his commitment with respect to future shipments is implied rather than explicit, as required in yesterday's Presidential letter.

(5) The letter does not again mention the Turkish bases as part of any present arrangement; but it does indicate that the USSR intends at some point to press for some form of arrangement involving NATO and the Warsaw Pact. Note, however, that Khrushchev's references to an agreement for UN supervision is based on his October 27 letter in which dismantling of the Turkish bases is proposed. Conceivably, therefore, this added demand may reappear when the arrangements for UN supervision in Cuba are being negotiated.

(6) Khrushchev indicates that at some point in the now developing negotiations he intends to press not only for an end to US overflights of Cuba and the USSR but also an end to peripheral reconnaissance of the USSR. He does not appear to make such cessation a precondition for the actions on Cuba to which he agrees, but apparently feels that he has a strong case for obtaining a stand-down of all US reconnaissance activities.

(7) With specific regard to reconnaissance over Cuba, Khrushchev may feel that his acceptance in principle of UN supervision over the dismantling of the Cuban ^{continue} missiles removes any justification for combined unilateral US surveillance. He has the option of claiming that continued US surveillance violates the US assurance against invasion of Cuba and hence his commitment to remove the missiles. It is clear that if we stand-down we will be blind at least until some form of UN observation is introduced into Cuba.

(8) We note that while Khrushchev refers to some instruction said to be already in effect, for cessation of work at the missile sites, preliminary information indicates that as of October 27, such work was continuing and that the entire Soviet missile launching force was assuming an increasing, integrated operational posture.

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CONCLUSIONS

(1) In general, the Khrushchev letter indicates great Soviet concern over the danger of war. The rapidity of the Soviet messages in the past few days suggests a Soviet awareness that time is running short and that the US may be planning further more drastic moves to secure removal of the Soviet missiles, whatever the consequences.

~~(b)(1)(4)(5)~~
(2) Moscow may also feel that there are still opportunities not only to weasel on the terms of control in Cuba but also to raise demands for verification of the US assurances, and on other issues such as Guantanamo. Khrushchev may hope that the inauguration of negotiations will ease the tension and permit Moscow to stall on the final removal of its missiles. The fuzzing of an explicit reply to the President's point on future missile systems suggests that Moscow may hope to come back some day.

(3) Khrushchev must know that the promised withdrawal of Soviet missiles from Cuba under the proposed conditions will, whatever he says about his success in preventing US aggression against Cuba and saving world peace, be regarded as a clear defeat for Soviet policy. This will inevitably affect the relationships of policy makers in the Kremlin as well as the future conduct of Soviet foreign policy.

(4) Internal Soviet Implications.

~~(b)(1)(4)(5)~~
If the Khrushchev letter turns out to be as complete a backdown as it presently appears to be, he will have to bear general responsibility for it within the Soviet Union. If he is the initiator of the retreat, as is very likely the case, he is vulnerable to charges of major policy failure from any opposition that exists to his leadership within the Soviet hierarchy. However, he has survived major policy failures before -- the 1960 U-2, Communist China, etc. -- and his ability to effect a policy retreat appears to attest to the firmness of his present leadership.

In addition, if Khrushchev was not the major initiator of the offensive Soviet military buildup in

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Cuba, or merely went along with it at others' urging, his position to move against those primarily responsible for it will be strengthened. Regardless of personal loss of fact involved, Khrushchev's popularity with the general Soviet public will probably be enhanced, since he is identified with a policy aimed at avoiding a nuclear war, a likelihood of which the Soviet people must now be generally aware.

(5) In the international field.

Khrushchev's first concern will be to picture the events as a triumph for "peaceloving" Soviet foreign policy and for "socialism." He will thus argue that he has forestalled a US invasion while preserving the Castro regime and maintaining Soviet protection and support for it. Despite all this he will also be under compulsion to seek a tangible compensation elsewhere.

~~(b)(7)(D)~~
Nevertheless, the basic strategic US military advantage and the vigorous US response to his gambit in Cuba, will have a dampening effect on his view of permissible Soviet initiatives even in those cases where the USSR has a local advantage. 1/14

For this reason, while rash action in such places as Berlin cannot be ruled out, we would expect that the short-run Soviet effort will be concentrated on a "peace offensive" designed to obtain compensating US military pull backs in areas adjacent to the USSR.

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